



ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

LEO P. SCHMITZ • DIRECTOR

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20th, 2016

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE ANNOUNCE TROOPER'S RETURN TO DUTY
AFTER SERIOUS IN THE LINE OF DUTY INJURY**

*Trooper Struck by Intoxicated Motorist Returns to Duty After Nearly Two Years
of Surgeries and Rehabilitation*

Downers Grove- The Illinois State Police (ISP), in conjunction with the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, announced the return of Trooper Michael Cokins to full duty in a press conference today. On September 6th, 2014 at 2:45pm, Trooper Michael Cokins was struck by a vehicle while conducting a traffic stop on I-294 northbound at North Ave. Trooper Cokins was on the right shoulder of the roadway when a vehicle, driven by an intoxicated motorist, struck his body. The impact of the collision, hurled Tpr Cokins over the hood of the vehicle he had pulled over. Trooper Cokins suffered 15 broken bones, underwent eight surgeries, and 17 months of therapy.

On May 1st, 2016, nearly two years since the crash, Trooper Cokins was cleared to return to full duty. Trooper Cokins returned to his original assignment with the ISP, patrolling the north Tri-State. "Michael's passion for police work and the Illinois State Police are the true epitome of the ISP's motto, Integrity, Service, and Pride," said ISP Director Leo Schmitz. "Michael is an example of the nearly two-thousand fine police officers the ISP employs that are committed to public safety and work hard every day to keep the citizens of Illinois safe," Schmitz added.

Director Schmitz also reminded the public of the dangers of driving while distracted, fatigued, and under the influence. In addition, Director Schmitz spoke about "Scotts Law," which requires a motorist to slow down and change lanes when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle. "It is a law in Illinois that when approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle, a person who drives an approaching vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, by making a lane change, or reduce speed and proceed with due caution if changing lanes would be impossible or unsafe," said Schmitz.

"Driving under the influence, driving while fatigued, and distracted driving are dangerous and deadly choices. Every time the driver of a vehicle makes the conscious choice to drive under any of these conditions they are risking their life and the countless lives of those around them," Schmitz concluded.

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COKINS' RETURN RELEASE

Director Schmitz then presented Trooper Cokins with the keys to his brand new squad car as a token to his long recovery and hard work to return to duty.

Trooper Cokins thanked all of those involved in coming to his aid after the incident. "For the last 20 months I have been hoping for the opportunity to say thank you to all the good Samaritans that stopped on Interstate 294 after I was struck and helped me while I was fighting for my life. I thank each and every one of you for your selfless actions that day," said Cokins. Trooper Cokins also thanked all of the members of the ISP, hospital staff, rehab staff, and emergency personnel that came to his aid and assisted in his recovery.

Trooper Cokins has been a member of the ISP since November of 2013, and has been assigned to District 15, which services the Illinois Tollway, since graduating from the ISP police academy.

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